

New Hampshire Estuaries Project

Request for Qualifications – Technical Assistance Providers

SUMMARY

The New Hampshire Estuaries Project (NHEP) is seeking Technical Assistance Providers to work with communities on a wide range of regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to natural resources protection. The NHEP *Management Plan* identifies many priorities that involve implementing actions at a local (community) level. In order to implement those actions from the *Management Plan* and to assist communities, the NHEP will fund Technical Assistance Providers (“TAPs”) to work with communities on natural resource topics of mutual interest to the community and the NHEP. The NHEP will select Technical Assistance Providers through this Request for Qualifications (RFQ). Interested organizations and firms with experience in natural resource protection should respond to this RFQ. Under a separate solicitation, the NHEP will request applications from planning boards and conservation commissions interested in receiving assistance with their natural resources protection efforts. The NHEP will then match the Technical Assistance Providers with specific community projects. The NHEP will make up to \$50,000 available through this pilot program to fund a number of community projects. If deemed successful, additional funding may be available.

NHEP MANAGEMENT PLAN RELEVANCE

The NHEP is a federally funded program that addresses local interests and concerns related to protection and enhancement of the state’s estuarine resources. The NHEP *Management Plan* includes a number of action plans that aim to protect and restore coastal watershed resources. The NHEP implements activities and awards funding to other entities to advance the goals and objectives outlined in the *Management Plan*. Many action plans involve providing assistance and information to planning boards and conservation commissions in order to advance their natural resources protection efforts. Through this technical assistance program, the NHEP aims to provide municipal planning boards and conservation commissions additional assistance and expertise to implement activities of mutual interest to communities and the NHEP.

Appendix A lists action plans from the *Management Plan* that broadly relate to services and outcomes targeted through this program. The full NHEP *Management Plan* can be downloaded from www.nh.gov/nhep/about/management-plan.htm or obtained by calling (603) 559-1500.

AREAS OF FOCUS

Projects to be completed by Technical Assistance Providers (TAPs) with NHEP funding will occur in cooperation with the 42 towns that are part of New Hampshire’s coastal watershed (see Appendix B for a map and list of communities).

The NHEP will solicit community projects from conservation commissions and planning boards and will fund TAPs to provide services related to regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to natural resource protection. Assistance categories and activities targeted through this Technical Assistance Program are listed below. Applicants should demonstrate their expertise in at least one of the three categories. Applicants are not expected to have expertise with every category or activity identified below. The NHEP will select multiple TAPs in order to cover all categories and activities.

Assistance categories and eligible activities:

1. Land Conservation Planning and Natural Resource Protection

- 1.1 Development of stewardship plans for town-owned conservation lands
- 1.2 Development of monitoring plans for town-held easements on conservation lands
- 1.3 Support for land conservation planning to protect areas of ecological priority, including development of strategies to identify high priority areas for protection and pursue protection of those areas
- 1.4 Development of GIS-based natural resources inventories

2. Protection of Buffers for Surface Waters and Wetlands

- 2.1 Development or amendment of buffer protection ordinances – assisting communities in developing and adopting land-use regulations to protect undisturbed shoreland buffers and wetlands buffers
- 2.2 Development or amendment of subdivision and site plan regulations to improve wetland/shoreland buffer protection
- 2.3 Prime wetlands designation
 - 2.3.1 Education and planning – educating communities on the process of prime wetlands designation and assisting communities to develop a plan to achieve the designation for their high value wetlands
 - 2.3.2 Wetlands evaluation – conducting wetlands evaluations consistent with the prime wetlands designation process [**Note: If a town wishes to use NHEP funds to conduct wetlands evaluations, the town must provide matching funds for the project. The NHEP will award up to \$8,000 for wetlands evaluations. This is the only type of project that will require towns to contribute matching funds.**]
- 2.4 Development and assistance in implementing an outreach program to town residents on buffer maintenance and protection

3. Stormwater Management

- 3.1 Development of regulations to limit stormwater runoff, including site plan and subdivision regulations and conservation design alternatives that incorporate open space protection, impervious surface limits, low impact development, infiltration, and/or innovative best management practices for stormwater treatment

- 3.2 Delivery of training for boards/committees on topics of stormwater management designs and calculations to assist in their review of stormwater management plans for development projects
- 3.3 Development and assistance in implementing an outreach program to town residents on minimizing impervious surfaces and stormwater runoff
- 3.4 Production of community build-out scenarios showing potential for development and changes in impervious surface cover

Although important, the following activities will **not** be included as eligible projects for this funding:

- Assistance with reviewing site plan and subdivision applications
- Capacity building/general administrative support to assist boards and committees
- Master plan updates and chapter development

OVERVIEW OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

On average community projects are expected to be in the range of \$5,000 worth of assistance and for a duration of three or four months. However individual projects may vary considerably in dollar amount and duration.

The following steps describe how the Technical Assistance Program is intended to work:

- The NHEP issues RFQ; applicants submit qualifications
- The NHEP evaluates qualifications and selects organizations to be eligible to receive NHEP funding to provide assistance to communities on natural resources projects (results in a list of “Technical Assistance Providers” or TAPs)
- The NHEP issues request for applications to conservation commissions and planning boards for community projects; communities submit applications (communities must identify focus area, outcome desired, product, and timeline)
- The NHEP reviews community projects – eligible projects queued up on a first-received, first-served basis as funding allows
- The NHEP matches TAP to community project; TAP prepares scope of services to meet community need
- The NHEP and TAP agree to a scope of services for the community project; the NHEP issues a purchase order to TAP: tasks, products, timeline, and “not to exceed” cost will be included as part of the agreement.
- TAP works with community to provide service as specified in agreement with the NHEP. TAP provides final report or final products to community and the NHEP.
- TAP submits invoice; payment is made by the NHEP
(Note: For longer-term projects, provisions can be made for interim payments as milestones are met or certain deliverables produced.)

RFQ APPLICATION PROCESS

Responders to this RFQ shall provide the following information as part of their application to the NHEP. Applicants are encouraged to partner with other organizations; however for the purpose of this application and any subsequent work assignments, a single lead organization shall be identified. Please structure your response to this RFQ to address the following:

- 1) Point of contact for the application (include name and complete contact information). This person will be contacted with questions on the application and, if selected, will be the primary point of contact to arrange future scopes of work for community projects.
- 2) Brief description of the organization/firm
- 3) Identify category(ies) for which you would provide assistance: (1) Land Conservation Planning and Natural Resource Protection; (2) Protection of Buffers for Surface Waters and Wetlands; and/or (3) Stormwater Management
- 4) Brief qualifications summary describing why your organization should be selected as a Technical Assistance Provider for this program; identify your organization's capacity to conduct work with town boards through this program
- 5) Identification and description of all staff that would serve as assistance providers. Include any subcontractors that are involved in your proposal.
- 6) Identification of **specific activities** for which you would like to be selected as a Technical Assistance Provider – refer to the eligible activities identified under the three assistance categories in the section titled, “AREAS OF FOCUS” above.
For each activity you have identified:
 - a. List primary personnel who would undertake activities, including any subcontractors if applicable
 - b. Describe your specific experience and qualifications with the activity and include specific qualifications of the personnel identified in your application that would conduct activities; describe related work your organization/firm has conducted that demonstrates your capability. For related projects and activities previously conducted, please identify personnel who worked on them, for whom projects were conducted, and what the outcomes were.
- 7) Reference list of past clients for work related to the areas of expertise identified in your application (minimum of 3)
- 8) Cost structure for services rendered, including methodology used to estimate costs
- 9) OPTIONAL: Resumes/vitae for key staff; brief project descriptions or products for related work; letters of reference/support; other materials to demonstrate your expertise

Applications should be limited to ten (10) typed, single space pages (excluding optional materials). Applicants must submit two printed copies of the application and an electronic copy on CD-ROM.

Applications must be received by the NHEP by 4:00 PM on May 5, 2005. Applications should be mailed or hand delivered to:

NH Estuaries Project

Attn: Mary Power – TAP Applications
DES Coastal Office
50 International Drive, Suite 200
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Questions concerning this RFQ should be directed to Jennifer Hunter, NHEP Director, at (603) 559-0020 or jhunter@des.state.nh.us.

TAP SELECTION PROCESS & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

An application review team comprised of NHEP staff and Management Committee members will make the final selection of qualified firms to provide assistance for the three project assistance categories. The application review team may request interviews with organizations before making the final selection. **Selection does not guarantee contractor a set amount of work or funding.** The level and type of work to be provided will be determined by communities' needs and interests in receiving certain types of assistance, as well as availability of funding. In the event that there are multiple TAPs capable of providing similar types of assistance, work will be allocated to TAPs on an equitable rotation with adjustments made, at the NHEP's discretion, for factors such as specific skills needed, quality of past work, amount and nature of services already assigned to a particular TAP, staff capacity of a particular TAP, projected costs of the project, and other factors deemed appropriate.

Upon notice from the NHEP of a potential project, the TAP and the NHEP shall first review the community application and discuss the project scope and timing. Additional input from the community may be sought. The TAP shall then prepare a proposed scope of services and a "not to exceed" cost for the services required to complete the assignment. TAPs will have up to three weeks from the initial assignment to submit the scope of services to the NHEP. Upon agreement of the scope of services and completion of an "Independent Contractor Agreement," a purchase order will be issued for the work assignment, and the TAP will begin working on the community project.

TIME LINE

RFQ Released by the NHEP – March 23, 2005

Deadline for qualifications submission to the NHEP – May 5, 2005

Selection of Technical Assistance Providers (TAPs) – July 2005

Community project solicitation released – June 2005

Community proposals for projects accepted on rolling basis – August 2005 to December 2005

Implementation of community projects (start and end dates staggered) – September 2005 to June 2007

Second round of community projects in 2006 if funding allows

Appendix A

***Management Plan* action plans that relate to services and outcomes targeted through this program**

LND-1: Prepare a report of current and future levels of imperviousness for the subwatersheds of the NH coastal watershed

LND-2: Implement steps to limit impervious cover and protect streams at the municipal level

LND-6E: Participate and contribute to the development of new smart growth planning tools with emphasis on provisions that protect estuarine water quality

LND-14: Develop and implement an outreach program to assist communities in developing and adopting land use regulations to protect undisturbed shoreland buffers

LND-15: Support land conservation efforts in shoreland areas

LND-20: Develop and implement a Wetlands Buffer Outreach Program for planning boards

LND-25: Encourage municipal designation of Prime Wetlands and 100-foot buffers (or equivalent protection)

LND-29: Provide technical assistance in land protection and management to regional land trusts and municipal conservation commissions

LND-36: Encourage conservation easements

The NHEP *Management Plan* can be downloaded from www.nh.gov/nhep/about/management-plan.htm or obtained by calling (603) 559-1500.

Appendix B

New Hampshire Coastal Watershed – Map and List of Communities



Barrington
Brentwood
Brookfield
Candia
Chester
Danville
Deerfield
Dover
Durham
East Kingston
Epping
Exeter
Farmington
Fremont
Greenland
Hampton
Hampton Falls
Kensington
Kingston
Lee
Madbury
Middleton
Milton
New Castle
New Durham
Newfields
Newington
Newmarket
North Hampton
Northwood
Nottingham
Portsmouth
Raymond
Rochester
Rollinsford
Rye
Sandown
Seabrook
Somersworth
Strafford
Stratham
Wakefield